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UNCLAS HARARE 001564

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR GURNEY
PARIS FOR NEARY
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PHUM KMDR ZI

SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT ANZ SUES INFORMATION MINISTER MOYO;
HARARE

¶1. We have a classic case here in which the prey has become the predator. Upset by "highly defamatory and malicious attacks" by Information and Publicity Minister Jonathan Moyo, the independent Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) - publishers of the "Daily News" and its sister weekly the "Daily News On Sunday" - has filed a Z\$58 million defamation suit against the minister, including the state-owned Zimbabwe Newspapers (ZIMPAERS) group - publishers of "The Herald" and six other titles - and Nathaniel Manheru, a columnist for ZIMPAPERS' flagship "The Herald" newspaper. According to an article carried in the August 5 edition of the independent daily "The Daily News," under headline "ANZ files \$58m defamation suit against Moyo, Herald," ANZ secretary and chief legal advisor Gugulethu Moyo is reported to have instructed ANZ lawyers to issue summons against Moyo in his personal capacity. ANZ is suing Moyo over various statements he allegedly made in the state media attacking and bringing into question the integrity of the ANZ newspapers and their editorial staff.

¶2. Among the offending stories cited in the summons is an article carried in the May 17 edition of "The Herald." In the article, Moyo is alleged to have attacked "The Daily News," its staff and the ANZ Group non-executive chairman Strive Masiyiwa over a story about a plan proposed by the international community to help lift Zimbabwe out of the current economic crisis. Another defamatory article cited in the summons appeared in "The Herald" of June 10, in which Information Minister Moyo is quoted "accusing Masiyiwa of using 'The Daily News' to destabilize Zimbabwe" and also harboring presidential ambitions. In the June 14 edition of "The Herald", Manheru allegedly wrote and ZIMPAPERS published and distributed an article suggesting that Masiyiwa owned and ran a newspaper "to advance his personal interests in opposition politics." According to an unnamed official, ANZ has "more than 300 articles in which he (Moyo) has made statements which were untrue, defamatory and highly prejudicial to the newspaper group." Information and Publicity Minister Jonathan Moyo is yet to file his papers at court responding to the ANZ suit against him.

WHITEHEAD